



Wednesday, March 15, 2006

Robotics team aims higher

G-C-Morristown group is in regional

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Greenfield

"Only those who dare to fail can ever achieve."

That old proverb is the motto for students from Greenfield-Central and Morristown high schools who partnered this year to compete in the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics competition.

Last weekend the team competed at the Pittsburgh Regional and garnered second place in General Motors Industrial Design. That honor earned the team a spot in the Boilermaker Regional at Purdue University, which will be Thursday, Friday and Saturday.

The Greenfield-Central/Morristown team call themselves the Full Metal Jackets and competes with a robot named Tina. The competition centers on matches of "robot ball" called "aim high." Each school's robot is designed to complete specific tasks, moving balls from the middle of the arena to goals on opposite sides of the field.

The three-day competition tests the technological ingenuity of high school students from the Midwest, who work together to build competitive robots.

"This is a great accomplishment," said Gary Wynn, technology teacher at Greenfield-Central High School and one of the team's coaches. "The kids got along really well and worked together to produce a first-rate robot for the competition."

The students might have done even better than their second-place standing going into regionals, Wynn said. Their robots experienced technical difficulties during a final round of competition.

"One of the robots broke, but they hobbled their way through to the end and earned their place in the next competition," Wynn said. "The kids are working to correct some of those problems and shouldn't have any more difficulties."

Despite last weekend's robotic shortcomings, the team still brought home the second-place ranking.

The students worked with sponsors Rolls-Royce Corp., BAX Global and K-T Corp. to get to their first two competitions. They have a good chance of earning a spot at the nationals, but they do not have a corporate sponsor to back the trip to the Georgia Dome in Atlanta for that competition next month.

"If the kids can get that far, it would be great to find a sponsor so that they can actually compete," Wynn said.

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